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ABSTRACT

In July 1989, a national telephone survey was conducted by the Gallup Organization to assess the attitudes and perceptions of a nationally representative sample of adults about American colleges. A total of 1,253 telephone interviews were conducted. Study findings included the following: (1) 38% of the respondents gave higher education a grade of "B," 35% gave it a "C," 6% thought it deserved an "A," and 10% gave a "D" or "F" grade; (2) 55% of the respondents gave the colleges an "A" or "B" for conducting scientific research, and 49% gave "A" or "B" grades for providing equal opportunity to succeed; (3) 39% of the respondents believed that what a person gets out of college over a lifetime is worth more than what he or she pays for attending college, but 22% felt that a college education today is not worth the cost of attendance; (4) 45% believed that all people, regardless of race, have equal access to a college education, but nearly an equal percentage believed that a person's race makes it harder for that person to gain access to a college education; and (5) women were more likely than men to feel that working with parents and community groups, increased counseling, more minority scholarships, and hiring more minority faculty were extremely important ways in which colleges can improve access to all high school graduates. The survey instrument and a news release summarizing findings are attached.) (JMC)

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Attitudes About American Colleges

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INTRODUCTION

This is a report on the findings of a national survey commissioned by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and conducted by The Gallup Organization. The study was designed to measure attitudes and perceptions about higher education held by adults. The specific objectives of this survey included:

- Grading the overall job colleges and universities are doing
- Grading specific aspects of a college education
- Evaluating the worth of a college education
- Assessing opinion toward equal opportunities for a college education
- Measuring the importance of various approaches to making a college degree accessible to all students regardless of race

METHODOLOGY

This survey is based on 1,253 telephone interviews among a nationally representative sample of adults, age 18 years and older. Interviewing for the survey took place between July 6, 1989 and July 9, 1989. The margin of error associated with this survey is plus or minus 3 percentage points. A more detailed description of the sample composition, design of the sample, sampling tolerance tables and questionnaire with overall results can be found in the technical appendix of this report.

SUMMARY REPORT

RATINGS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

While adult Americans generally give moderate ratings to the overall job colleges and universities are doing, young people gave superior grades to higher education institutions in a survey conducted by The Gallup Organization for CASE last year. The majority of adults in the current survey grade higher education institutions a "B" (38%) or "C" (35%). Only 6% think colleges and universities deserve an "A," while 10% would give them a "D" (7%) or failing grade of "F" (3%).

The 1988 survey of young people exemplifies the importance of age in forming opinions of higher education institutions. In the survey last year, fully three-fourths of 13 to 21 year-olds rated the overall performance of colleges and universities an "A" or "B" (76%) compared with 42% of all adults in the current survey and 54% of young adults (18-29 years old) questioned this year. In the current survey, the younger the respondent, the more likely they are to give relatively high grades. A majority of respondents between the ages of 18 and 29 rate colleges an "A" or "B" (54%) while 44% of 30 to 49 year olds give similarly high ratings. Fewer than four in ten adults fifty years old or older give colleges an "A" or "B" for the overall job they are doing (38%).

There are very few sub-group differences in the grades people would assign colleges. Interestingly, no significant differences based on education or income are seen, although the poorer and less well educated respondents are more likely to be unable to rate higher education institutions at all (less than high school graduate 22% don't know, less than $20,000 annual household income 16% don't know). The only demographic characteristic besides age that affects opinion is party affiliation. Republicans are significantly more likely than either Democrats or Independents to give colleges and universities a grade of "A" or "B" for their overall performance (Rep.=50% vs. Dem./Ind.=42%).

GRADE GIVEN TO COLLEGES FOR OVERALL PERFORMANCE

	Current				1988
		Age			Age
	Total	18-29	30-49	50+	13-21
	%	%	%	%	%
A	6	8	5	7	18
B	38	46	39	31	58
C	35	38	39	29	15
D	7	3	7	8	1
F	3	1	3	5	1
Don't Know	11	4	7	20	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Number of Interviews	(1253)	(298)	(534)	(402)	(1001)

In addition to asking adults to rate the overall job colleges and universities are doing, respondents were also asked to rate various aspects of a college education using the same A through F grading system. A majority of Americans believe colleges and universities excel in conducting scientific research with 17% giving higher education institutions an "A" in this area and an additional 38% rating the system a "B." About half the public gives colleges an "A" or "B" in the area providing all Americans with equal opportunity to succeed (49%). About four in ten believe colleges and universities do a satisfactory job preparing students to be productive members of the work-force (43% A or B), offering opportunities for students to explore their own personal values (41% A or B), and producing teachers for the future (39% A or B). Slightly fewer (37%) rate higher education institutions an "A" or "B" in the area of preparing students to be good citizens.

GRADE GIVEN COLLEGES FOR VARIOUS ASPECT OF EDUCATION

	A or B	C or below	Don't Know	Total
	%	%	%	%
Conducting scientific research	55	31	14	100
Providing all Americans with equal opportunity to succeed	49	47	4	100
Preparing students to be productive members of the work-force	43	52	5	100
Offering opportunities to explore one's values	41	48	11	100
Producing quality teachers for the future	39	55	6	100
Making young people good citizens	37	58	5	100
Overall performance (previous question)	44	45	11	100

While not shown in the above table, it may be noted that the public tends to be more willing to rate specific aspects of a college education at the extreme ends of the scale (either "A" or "D" or "F") and is more moderate in its overall rating of colleges and universities. Only six percent of the public rates the overall performance of colleges an "A" while two to three times as many rate each individual aspect of college that highly. Similarly, only one in ten rate colleges and universities a "D" or "F" overall, while 14% to 20% give such negative grades to specific areas of a college education.

Many demographic differences are seen in how people rate various aspects of a college education. The most consistent sub-group differences are seen by education and region. Respondents living in the western part of the country are less likely than people living in other parts of the country to give the colleges an "A" or "B" when it comes to

making good citizens (28% vs. 39%), creating a productive work-force (35% vs. 45%), training future teachers (28% vs. 41%) and giving students the opportunity to explore personal values (31% vs. 44%). Southern residents are particularly likely to rate colleges highly on producing quality teachers for the future (47% vs. 35% rest of country) and offering equal opportunities for all to succeed (58% vs. 44%). Respondents in the East, more often than people from other sections of the nation, rate schools an "A" or "B" for producing a talented work-force (50% vs. 41%).

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN A/B GRADING OF
INDIVIDUAL ASPECTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

	Total	East	Midwest	South	West
	%	%	%	%	%
Conducting scientific research	55	52	55	57	57
Equal opportunity to succeed	49	48	44	58	40
Productive work-force	43	50	42	43	35
Exploring one's values	41	46	41	45	31
Future quality teachers	39	36	39	47	28
Making good citizens	37	41	36	39	28
Number of Interviews	(1253)	(305)	(322)	(372)	(253)

Similar widespread differences in opinion are seen based on the respondent's level of educational attainment. With the exception of rating colleges' ability to conduct scientific research, the better educated segment of the population tends to give lower grades to the various aspects of a college education than does the less well educated public. Adults with a college education, either complete or incomplete, are less likely than those without any college training to rate higher education institutions an "A" or "B" in the areas of preparing students to be good citizens (28% vs. 42%) and producing future teachers (35% vs. 41%). Similarly, those people with at least a high school degree are less likely than those without a high school degree to give satisfactory ratings in the areas of offering equal opportunities for all (45% vs. 64%) and the ability to produce a talented

work-force (40% vs. 58%). The one deviation from this pattern is ratings of scientific research where college graduates are more likely than those with less education to rate the colleges an "A" or "B" when it comes to the conduct of scientific research (61% vs. 54%).

EDUCATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN A/B GRADING OF INDIVIDUAL ASPECTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

	Total	College Grad.	Other College	High School Grad.	Less than High School Grad.
	%	%	%	%	%
Conducting scientific research	55	61	55	55	50
Equal opportunity to succeed	49	46	42	45	64
Productive work-force	43	39	37	41	58
Exploring one's values	41	46	35	41	46
Future quality teachers	39	35	36	40	45
Making good citizens	37	30	27	39	49
Number of Interviews	(1253)	(393)	(251)	(458)	(141)

In addition to the patterns of demographic differences noted above, sub-group differences by each individual aspect are also seen:

Providing all Americans with equal opportunity to succeed

- Both young adults (18-29) and older people (50+) are more likely than middle aged adults (30-49) to rate the opportunities colleges offer an "A" or "B" (18-29=54%, 30-49=43%, 50 and older=51%)
- Republicans are more likely than Democrats and Independents to grade the colleges "A" or "B" in equal opportunity afforded to students (52% vs. 46%).

Preparing students to be productive members of the work-force

- Respondents with household incomes less than $30,000 annually are more likely than the more affluent to grade the colleges "A" or "B" in the work-force area (48% vs. 38%)
- Non-white respondents more often give positive ratings to the colleges regarding future workers than do whites (58% vs. 41%).

Producing quality teachers for the future

- Young adults (18-29) give higher ratings to colleges for producing quality teachers than do older respondents (44% "A" or "B" vs. 37%)
- People in households earning less than $20,000 annually more often rate colleges an "A" or "B" for educating future teachers than do more wealthy respondents (46% vs. 36%).

Making young people good citizens

- Younger respondents, under the age of thirty, more often rate colleges an "A" or "B" in the area of citizenship than do older respondents (44% vs. 34%)
- Democrats are more likely than both Republicans and Independents to believe the higher education institutions in this country are doing a good job of teaching students to be good citizens (41% "A" or "B" vs. 34%)
- As annual household income decreases, the tendency to rate the schools an "A" or "B" for producing good citizens increases ($50,000 and over=29%, $20,000-$49,999=34%, under $20,000=44%)
- People with no close ties to college -- neither the respondent, nor the respondent's spouse or child have attended college in the past ten years -- are more likely than people with closer ties to higher education to believe colleges are doing a good job of creating quality citizens (41% vs. 32%).

WORTH OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION

There is a consensus among the public that a college education is a good investment. Four in ten (39%) believe that what a person gets out of a college education is worth more than what they pay for attending college. About one-third (35%) say that the value of a college education is equal to what they pay to go to college. Slightly more than one in five (22%) however, believe that a college education today is not worth what it costs to attend.

Those people most likely to have benefitted from a college education -- college graduates (56%), and those with household incomes of $50,000 or more annually (60%) -- are most likely to say a college education today is worth more than what a person pays to go to college. As income level or level of formal education decreases, so too does the tendency to believe that a college education is a good investment. Other population

groups more likely to think the value of a higher education exceeds the costs include men (49%), whites (48%), 30 to 49 year olds (43%), and Republicans (46%).

Proximity to the higher educational system and opinions of how well colleges are doing also has a bearing on the perceived worth of a college education. Americans who attended college themselves in the past ten years, or have a spouse or child that attended college in the past ten years, are more likely than those with no ties to the higher educational system to think that people get more out of college than what they pay for that education (45% vs. 33%). Likewise, adults who give colleges and universities an overall grade of "A" or "B" are more likely than those who grade the schools lower to believe students get more out of college than they have to pay (46% vs. 33%).

VALUE OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION TODAY

	Worth More	About Equal	Worth Less	Don't Know	Total	N
	%	%	%	%	%	
Total	39	35	22	4	100	(1253)
Sex						
Male	49	29	19	3	100	(632)
Female	31	41	24	4	100	(621)
Age						
18-29	37	40	21	2	100	(298)
30-49	43	30	25	2	100	(534)
50 and over	37	37	19	7	100	(402)
Education						
College graduate	56	23	18	3	100	(393)
Some college	38	34	26	2	100	(251)
H.S. graduate	34	38	25	3	100	(458)
Less than H.S. grad.	31	45	17	7	100	(141)
Race						
White	42	34	20	4	100	(1075)
Non-white	25	43	30	2	100	(166)
Political Ideology						
Republican	46	33	19	2	100	(421)
Democrat	36	38	22	4	100	(383)
Independent	36	35	24	5	100	(449)
Income						
$50,000 or more	60	22	17	1	100	(275)
$30,000-$49,999	42	30	25	3	100	(320)
$20,000-$29,999	37	39	20	4	100	(253)
Less than $20,000	27	45	21	7	100	(321)
Proximity to Higher Education						
Close to college	45	31	21	3	100	(690)
Not close to college	33	40	22	5	100	(563)
College Grade						
A/B	46	37	14	3	100	(578)
C or below	33	34	30	3	100	(558)

The Question: *In general, how do you feel about the worth of a college education today? Do you think the overall value most college graduates get back in their lifetime is worth more than they pay for attending college, is worth less than they pay for attending college, or that the value is about equal to what they pay?*

ACCESSIBILITY OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION TO MINORITIES

The public is divided in its opinion about how race affects the accessibility of a college education. Forty-five percent of the people surveyed believe all people, regardless of race, have equal accessibility to a college education. However, just as many (44%) do not think that is true and state that a person's race makes it harder for that person to gain access to a college education.

Not surprisingly, the race of the respondent affects opinion on this question of equal access with non-white adults being significantly more likely than their white counterparts to feel race makes it harder for a person to gain access to a college education (59% vs. 42%). Other sub-groups of the population who are also more likely to feel race has an adverse effect on college opportunities include people under the age of 50 compared with older adults (47% vs. 40%), and respondents who consider themselves either Democrats or Independents compared with Republicans (47% vs. 39%).

The following other sub-groups among the public are more likely than their counterparts to feel all people, regardless of race, have equal access to a college education: Southerners (50%), Republicans (52%), those with close ties to higher education (49%) and people who believe students get more from a college education than they pay for that education (51%).

ACCESS TO A COLLEGE EDUCATION

	Everyone Equal Access	Race Makes It Harder	Race Makes It Easier	Don't Know	Total	N
	%	%	%	%	%	
Total	45	44	4	7	100	(1253)
Age						
18-29	45	49	2	4	100	(298)
30-49	45	46	5	4	100	(534)
50 and over	45	40	4	11	100	(402)
Race						
White	46	42	5	7	100	(1746)
Non-white	34	59	0	7	100	(166)
Region						
East	44	46	4	6	100	(305)
Midwest	44	46	4	6	100	(322)
South	50	41	2	7	100	(372)
West	38	48	6	8	100	(253)
Political Ideology						
Republican	52	39	3	6	100	(421)
Democrat	41	48	1	10	100	(383)
Independent	42	46	7	5	100	(449)
Proximity to Higher Education						
Close college	49	42	4	5	100	(690)
Not close to college	41	47	3	9	100	(563)
Value of Education						
More	51	41	4	4	100	(530)
Less	42	49	3	6	100	(262)
Same	41	46	4	9	100	(412)

The Question: *Do you think that all high school graduates -- regardless of race -- have equal access to a college education, or do you think a person's race makes it harder to gain access to a college education?*

Respondents were questioned about a number of possible ways colleges could increase the accessibility of a college education to students of all races. Two suggestions that the public thinks would do the most to increase accessibility to a college education are working closely with parent, community and church groups and developing programs with elementary and secondary schools to encourage minority participation. About six in ten Americans believe working with parental and community groups (60%) and developing programs at lower school grades (58%) would be extremely important ways to increase accessibility for minority youth. About one-half (52%) think that increased counselling and support services at both the college and high schools level would be an extremely important way of gaining equal opportunities for minorities wishing to get a college degree. While fewer people see offering minority scholarships (42%), improving the social climate on college campuses (42%) or hiring minority faculty as role models (37%) as extremely important in the scheme for improving minority accessibility to a college degree, more than three-fourths think each of these methods is at least somewhat important.

WAYS TO INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY OF A COLLEGE DEGREE TO ALL

	Extremely Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Important %	Don't Know %	Total %
Working closely with parent, community and church groups to encourage minority participation	60	30	8	2	100
Developing programs with elementary and secondary schools to encourage college participation among minority students	58	32	8	2	100
Increased counselling and support services for minorities in both high school and college	52	34	11	3	100
Offering minority scholarships and other forms of financial aid	42	39	16	3	100
Improving the social climate on college campus to encourage more interaction between white and minority groups	42	37	17	4	100
Hiring minority faculty who will serve as role models	37	42	17	4	100

The Question: *Next, I'd like to read you a list of ways colleges and universities might increase the accessibility of a college degree to all high school graduates regardless of race. For each, please tell me if you think this is an extremely important was to increase accessibility , a somewhat important way, or not an important way to increase accessibility for students of all races...*

Many differences are seen in how demographic sub-groups rate the importance of each of the approaches presented for increasing the accessibility of a college education. The most consistent sub-group differences are by gender, race and attitudes toward college education in general. Women are more likely than men to feel working with parents and community groups (64% vs. 55%), increased counselling (58% vs. 46%), more minority scholarships (47% vs. 35%) and hiring more minority faculty as role models (42% vs. 31%) are extremely important ways that colleges can improve the accessibility of a college education to all high school graduates regardless of race. Similarly, non-whites are also more likely than whites to think each of the suggestions examined is extremely important to fostering equal opportunities. Likewise, respondents who believe race makes it harder to gain access to a college education are also more likely to say extremely important to each of the suggestions for increasing college accessibility to all high school graduates.

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT WAYS TO INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY TO ALL

		Sex		Race		Accessibility	
	Total	Male	Female	White	Non-white	Equal	Harder
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Working with parents and community groups	60	55	64	58	70	55	66
Elementary and secondary school programs	58	56	60	54	81	55	64
Increased counselling	52	46	58	49	73	44	61
Scholarships and financial aid	42	35	47	37	72	30	54
Improving social climate on college campuses	42	42	42	37	69	35	49
Hiring minority faculty as role models	37	31	42	33	59	26	47
Number of Interviews	(1253)	(632)	(621)	(1075)	(166)	(565)	(561)

In addition to the overall consistent pattern of differences by gender, race and attitude toward accessibility to college, the viewpoints of other population segments vary significantly for several of the proposals presented. Sub-groups among the population more likely than their counterparts to believe each of the following ideas is an *extremely important* way to increase accessibility to college for students of all races appear below:

Developing programs at the elementary and secondary grade level

- Adults under 30 (64%) versus older respondents (56%)

Increased counselling and support services for minorities

- Adults who grade colleges and universities an "A" or "B" (56%) versus those rating colleges "C" or below (49%)

Offering more scholarships and other financial aid

- Democrats (47%) versus Republicans (36%) and Independents (41%)
- Lower income levels versus higher income levels -- (under $20,000 = 50%; $20,000-$49,999 = 40%; $50,000 and over = 33%)
- Those people with no ties to the higher educational system (45%) versus respondents who attended college themselves or have family members who have attended college in the past 10 years (38%)
- Adults who rate colleges an "A" or "B" (47%) versus those who rate schools "C" or below (38%)

Improving social climate on college campuses

- Adults under 30 (52%) versus older respondents (39%)
- Respondents who did not graduate from college (44%) versus college graduates (32%)
- Members of households earning less than $50,000 annually (45%) versus Americans in more affluent households (33%)
- Residents from the East (49%) versus people living in other parts of the country (40%)

Hiring minority faculty to serve as role models

- Democrats (45%) versus Republicans/Independents (33%)
- Respondents from households with annual income less than $50,000 (40%) versus those from households earning at $50,000 or more (27%)

TECHNICAL APPENDIX

SAMPLE COMPOSITION

	Weighted Percentages %	Number of Interviews #
TOTAL	100.0	1253
Sex		
Male	47.2	632
Female	52.8	621
	100.0	1,253
Age		
18-29	24.2	298
30-49	39.7	534
50 and older	34.4	402
Undesignated	1.7	19
	100.0	1,253
Education		
College graduate	22.0	393
Other college	19.5	251
High school graduate	39.3	458
Less than high school graduate	18.3	141
Undesignated	.9	10
	100.0	1,253
Race		
White	85.1	1075
Non-white	13.8	166
Undesignated	1.1	12
	100.0	1,253
Region		
East	24.8	305
Midwest	24.8	322
South	30.2	372
West	20.2	254
	100.0	1,253

DESIGN OF THE SAMPLE

The Gallup Organization's standard national telephone samples are unclustered random digit dial (RDD) samples purchased from Survey Sampling, Incorporated, and are based on a proportionate stratified sampling design.

The random digit aspect of the sample is used to avoid "listing" bias. According to the most recent estimates from the Bureau of the Census, there are 91 million households in the United States, and just over 92% of them contain one or more telephones. Telephone directories only list about 71% of such "telephone households," and numerous studies have shown that households with unlisted telephone numbers are different in several important ways from listed households. Moreover, nearly 15% of listed telephone numbers are "discontinued" due to household mobility and directory publishing lag, and it is reasonable to assume that a roughly equal number are working residential numbers too new to be found in published directories.

In order to avoid these various sources of bias, a random digit procedure designed to provide representation of both listed and unlisted (including not-yet-listed) numbers is used. The design of the sample ensures this representation by random generation of the last two digits of telephone numbers selected on the basis of their area code, telephone exchange (the first three digits of a seven digit telephone number), and bank number (the fourth and fifth digits).

The selection procedure produces a sample that is superior to random selection from a frame of listed telephone households, and the superiority is greater to the degree that the assignment of telephone numbers to households is made independently of their publication status in the directory. That is, if unlisted numbers tend to be found in the same telephone banks as listed numbers and if, in general, banks containing relatively few listed numbers also contain relatively few unlisted numbers, then the sample that results from the procedure described below will represent unlisted telephone households fully as well as it represents listed households. Random number selection within banks ensures that all numbers within a particular bank (whether listed or unlisted) have the same likelihood of inclusion in the sample, and that the sample so generated will represent listed and unlisted telephone households in the appropriate proportions.

A database of listed telephone numbers for the continental United States is first stratified into 4 regions of the country and, within region, telephone numbers are further stratified into three size-of-community strata: (a) incorporated cities of population 1,000,000 and over; (b) incorporated cities of population 250,000 to 999,999; and (c) the remainder of the continental United States. Separate samples are drawn from each of the resulting 12 region/ size-of-community strata. The first eight digits of the sample telephone numbers (area code, telephone exchange, and bank number) are then selected after further geographic pre-stratification of this database so that within each region and size-of-community stratum state, county, and telephone exchange within county are all represented in their appropriate proportions. That is, the number of telephone numbers randomly sampled from within a given exchange is proportional to that exchange's share of listed telephone households in the set of exchanges from which the sample is drawn.

Only working banks of numbers are selected. A working bank is defined as 100 contiguous telephone numbers containing three or more residential telephone listings. By eliminating non-working banks of numbers from the sample, the likelihood that any sampled telephone number will be associated with a residence increases from only 20% (where all banks of numbers are sampled) to between 60% and 70%.

The sample of telephone numbers produced by this method is thus designed to produce an unbiased random sampling of telephone households in the continental United States.

Quotas for completed interviews within each of the 12 strata are set proportionate to the distribution of continental United States telephone households in the twelve areas.

Within each contacted household, an interview is sought with the youngest man 18 years or older who is at home. If no man is at home, an interview is sought with the oldest woman at home. In addition, a quota is set so that 50% of completed interviews in each of the 12 areas are male and 50% are female. This method of respondent selection within households produces an age distribution by sex that closely approximates the age by sex distribution of the total population.

Up to three calls are made to each selected telephone number in order to complete an interview. The time of day and the day of the week for callbacks is varied so as to

Up to three calls are made to each selected telephone number in order to complete an interview. The time of day and the day of the week for callbacks is varied so as to maximize the chances of finding a respondent at home. All interviews are conducted on weekends or weekday evenings so that potential respondents who work full-time can be contacted.

The final sample is weighted so that the region by age by sex by education distribution and the region by sex by race distribution of the sample matches current estimates derived from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) for the adult population living in telephone households in the continental U.S.

SAMPLING TOLERANCES

In interpreting survey results, it should be borne in mind that all sample surveys are subject to sampling error, that is, the extent to which the results may differ from what would be obtained if the whole population surveyed had been interviewed. The size of such sampling errors depends largely on the number of interviews.

The following tables may be used in estimating the sampling error of any percentage in this report. The computed allowances have taken into account the effect of the sample design upon sampling error. They may be interpreted as indicating the range (plus or minus the figure shown) within which the results of repeated samplings in the same time period could be expected to vary, 95 percent of the time, assuming the same sampling procedure, the same interviewers, and the same questionnaire.

The first table shows how much allowance should be made for the sampling error of a percentage:

Recommended Allowance For Sampling Error
Error of a Percentage

In Percentage Points
(At 95 in 100 Confidence Level)*

	Sampling Size					
	1253	1000	600	500	300	100
Percentages near 10	2	2	3	3	4	6
Percentages near 20	2	3	4	4	5	9
Percentages near 30	3	3	4	4	6	10
Percentages near 40	3	3	4	5	6	11
Percentages near 50	3	3	4	5	6	11
Percentages near 60	3	3	4	5	6	11
Percentages near 70	3	3	4	4	6	10
Percentages near 80	2	3	4	4	5	9
Percentages near 90	2	2	3	3	4	6

The table would be used in the following manner: Let us say a reported percentage is 43 for a group which includes 1253 respondents. Then we go to row "percentages near 40" in the table and go across to the column headed "1253." The number at this point is 3 which means that the 43 percent obtained in the sample is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 3 points. Another way of saying it is that very probably (95 chances out of 100) the average of repeated sampling would be somewhere between 40 and 46 with the most likely figure the 43 obtained.

In comparing survey results in two samples, for example, men and women, the question arises as to how large must a difference between them be before one can be reasonably sure that it reflects a real difference. In the tables below, the number of points which must be allowed for in such comparisons is as indicated.

Two tables are provided. One is for percentages near 20 or 80; the others for percentages near 50. For percentages in between, the error to be allowed for is between those shown in the two tables:

Recommended Allowance For Sampling Error
Of The Differences

In Percentage Points
(at 95 in 100 confidence level)*

Table A Percentages near 20 or percentages near 80

Size of Sample	1253	1000	600	500	300	100
1253	3					
1000	4	4				
600	4	4	5			
500	5	5	5	5		
300	6	6	6	6	7	
100	9	9	9	9	10	12

Table B Percentages near 50

Size of Sample	1253	1000	600	500	300	100
1253	4					
1000	5	5				
600	5	6	6			
500	6	6	7	7		
300	7	7	8	8	9	
100	11	11	12	12	12	15

Here is an example of how the tables would be used: Let us say that 40 percent of men respond a certain way and 50 percent of women respond that way also, for a difference of 10 percentage points between them. Can we say with any assurance that the 10-point difference reflects a real difference between men and women on the question? The sample contains approximately 600 men and 600 women.

Since the percentages are near 50, we consult Table B, and since the two samples are about 600 persons each, we look for the number in the column headed "600" which is also in the row designated "600". We find the number 6 here. This means that the allowance for error should be 6 points, and that in concluding that the percentage among men is somewhere between 4 and 16 points higher than the percentage among women we should be wrong only about 5 percent of the time. In other words, we can conclude with considerable confidence that a difference exists in the direction and that it amounts to at least 4 percentage points.

If, in another case, male responses amount to 22 percent, say, and female to 24 percent, we consult Table A because these percentages are near 20. We look in the column headed "600" and see that the number is 5. Obviously, then, the 2-point difference is inconclusive.

QUESTIONNAIRE WITH RESULTS

Interviewing Dates - 7/6/89 to 7/9/89
Margin of Error + or - 3
Number of Interviews 1253

1. Students are often given the grade of A, B, C, D, and Fail to rate the quality of their work. Suppose colleges and universities in the United States were graded in the same way. What grade would you give colleges and universities in the U.S. in terms of the overall job they are doing -- A, B, C, D, or Fail?

6	A
38	B
35	C
7	D
3	Fail
11	DON'T KNOW
100	

2. Using the same A through Fail grading scale, I'd like you to rate the job America's colleges and universities are doing in each of the following areas. First ... (READ LIST. START AT X)

	A	B	C	D	F	Don't Know
a. Making young people good citizens	12	25	34	16	8	5 =100
b. Preparing students to be productive members of the work-force	13	30	37	10	5	5 =100
c. Conducting scientific research	17	38	23	6	2	14 =100
d. Producing quality teachers for the future	11	28	35	14	6	6 =100
e. Providing all Americans with equal opportunity to succeed	18	31	29	11	7	4 =100
f. Offering opportunities to explore one's values	13	28	33	10	5	11 =100

3. In general, how do you feel about the worth of a college education today? Do you think the overall value most college graduates get back in their lifetime is worth more than they pay for attending college, is worth less than they pay for attending college, or that the value is about equal to what they pay?

39	Worth more than they pay
22	Worth less than they pay
35	Value about equal to what they pay
4	DON'T KNOW
100	

4. Do you think that all high school graduates -- regardless of race -- have equal access to a college education, or do you think a person's race makes it harder to gain access to a college education?

45	Everyone has equal access regardless of race
44	Race makes it harder to gain access
4	RACE MAKES IT EASIER - VOL.
7	DON'T KNOW
100	

5. Next, I'd like to read you a list of ways colleges and universities might increase the accessibility of a college degree to all high school graduates regardless of race. For each, please tell me if you think this is an extremely important way to increase accessibility, a somewhat important way, or not an important way to increase accessibility for students of all races. First, ... (INSERT ITEM. START AT X)

	Extremely Important	Somewhat Important	Not Import.	Don't Know
a. Developing programs with elementary and secondary schools to encourage college participation among minority students	58	32	8	2 =100
b. Working closely with parent, community and church groups to encourage minority participation in college	60	30	8	2 =100
c. Increased counselling and support services for minorities in both high school and college	52	34	11	3 =100
d. Offering minority scholarships and other forms of financial aid	42	39	16	3 =100
e. Hiring minority faculty who will serve as role models	37	42	17	4 =100
f. Improving the social climate on college campus' to encourage more interaction between whites and minority students	42	37	17	4 =100

6. Did you, yourself, your spouse, or one of your children attend college or university within the past ten years? (IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS YES PROBE: Was that you personally who attended college, your spouse, or was it one of your children?)(ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES)

29	Respondent attended college/university in past ten years
9	Spouse attended college/university in past ten years
18	Child of respondent attended college/university in past ten years
49	Neither respondent, spouse, nor child attended college/university in past ten years
1	DON'T KNOW
106	**total exceeds 100% due to multiple responses**

THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOCIETY

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE ON
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REMOVING RACIAL BARRIERS TO HIGHER EDUCATION:
THE AMERICAN PUBLIC OFFERS OPINIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

WASHINGTON, DC — The American public is divided over whether a person's race makes it harder to pursue and obtain a college degree, according to a new national poll released today by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and conducted by The Gallup Organization as part of National Higher Education Week, October 8-14. While many of those surveyed believe race makes no difference in gaining accessibility to a college education, an equal number believe a person's race makes it harder to gain accessibility.

The two most important ways colleges and universities can increase accessibility for students of all races, according to the majority of the 1,253 respondents age 18 and older, are 1) to work more closely with parent, community, and church groups and 2) to develop programs with elementary and secondary schools. Significantly fewer respondents say other suggestions — such as hiring minority faculty who can serve as role models, or offering minority scholarships and other forms of financial aid — are "extremely important" in increasing minority participation.

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At the same time, white and non-white respondents differ somewhat as to which specific ways they consider extremely important for increasing accessibility to college. For instance, the item that attracts the greatest support among whites is working with parent, community, and church groups, with 58% saying "extremely important." Instead, non-whites most frequently name colleges and universities working with elementary and secondary school programs as extremely important (81%).

Gary H. Quehl, president of CASE, said of the findings: "Colleges and universities across the country are dedicated to improving minority access. They have developed thousands of innovative programs and are investing significant resources toward achieving this goal. However, the survey underscores that we can take nothing for granted and must continue to explore a wide range of options. We must redouble our efforts to increase both accessibility to college and educational success for all qualified individuals."

CASE recently formed a National Commission on Educational Opportunity chaired by Eugene Lang, founder of the "I-Have-A-Dream" Foundation, and comprising education and other civic leaders from across the country. The basic purpose of the commission is to encourage colleges to become more effective in assisting disadvantaged and minority youths to succeed through all levels of education, including college.

National Higher Education Week is an annual event hundreds of campuses around the country are observing. This year's theme is "Higher Education: Be a Part of It," and stresses the participation of all American citizens in higher education.

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Specific Findings

More than four out of ten (45%) adult Americans surveyed believe all high school graduates, regardless of race, have equal accessibility to a college education. However, virtually the same number (44%) disagree, and believe a person's race makes it harder for that person to gain access to a college education. Non-white adults are significantly more likely than their white counterparts to believe race makes it harder for a person to gain access to a college education (59% vs. 42%).

When questioned about possible ways colleges could increase the accessibility of a college education to students of all races, six in ten Americans say they believe working closely with parent, community, and church groups to encourage minority participation is extremely important.

Only slightly fewer respondents (58%) say developing programs with elementary and secondary schools to encourage college participation among minority students is extremely important as well. In addition, more than half (52%) think increased counselling and support services at both the college and high school level would be an extremely important way of gaining equal opportunities for minorities wishing to get a college degree.

This compares with only four out of ten respondents (42%) who say offering minority scholarships and other forms of financial aid is extremely important. An equal number (42%) say improving the social climate on college campuses to encourage more interaction between white and minority groups is extremely important for encouraging the participation of minorities.

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Hiring minority faculty who can serve as role models is cited by the smallest number of respondents (37%) as an extremely important way to increase accessibility to a college degree for students of all races.

Non-whites are more likely than whites to think each of the suggestions examined is extremely important in fostering equal opportunities. It is important to note, as well, that non-whites and whites differ somewhat in how they rate the various ways of increasing accessibility:

Suggested ways to Increase Accessibility: "Extremely Important" Rating By	whites:	non-whites:
Working with parents and community groups	(58%)	(70%)
Elementary and secondary school programs	(54%)	(81%)
Increased counselling	(49%)	(73%)
Scholarships and financial aid	(37%)	(72%)
Improving social climate on college campuses	(37%)	(69%)
Hiring minority faculty and role models	(33%)	(59%)

In addition, women are more likely than men to feel working with parents and community groups (64% vs. 55%), increased counselling (58% vs. 46%), more minority scholarships (47% vs. 35%), and hiring more minority faculty as role models (42% vs. 31%) are extremely important ways colleges can improve the accessibility of a college education to all high school graduates regardless of race.

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CASE is the nation's largest education association in terms of institutional membership, with approximately 2,850 colleges, universities, and independent secondary and elementary schools as members. CASE's mission is to advance public understanding and support of education for the benefit of society.

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The findings for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted by The Gallup Organization from July 6, 1989 to July 9, 1989 with 1,253 adults age 18 years and older. Respondents were drawn from a nationally representative sample of telephone households. The margin of error due to sampling for the total sample of 1,253 respondents is plus or minus 3 percentage points. Additional allowance must be made for statistical variation in the case of findings consisting of relatively small sub-groups of respondents, e.g. non-whites.

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